



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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Changes to North Dakota's Child Passenger Safety Law Effective August 1, 2005 *More Children Will Be Required To Ride in a Car Seat or Booster Seat*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Children in North Dakota soon will be riding more safely because of changes in the state's child passenger safety law, according to Carol Meidinger, director of the North Dakota Department of Health's Injury Prevention Program.

Effective August 1, children younger than 7 will be required to ride in a child restraint (car seat or booster seat) – unless they weigh more than 80 pounds and are more than 57 inches (4'9") tall. Children ages 7 through 17 will need to use a seat belt or child restraint. The revised law carries a penalty of \$25 and 1 point against the license of the driver.

"Many children affected by the new law will need to use booster seats to comply," Meidinger said. "Booster seats raise the child up, helping the seat belt fit correctly. However, **booster seats must be used with a lap and shoulder belt**. For vehicles without lap and shoulder belts, the new law allows a lap belt to be used for children who weigh more than 40 pounds."

Booster seats come in two general types – backless boosters and high-back boosters. High-back boosters are recommended if the vehicle seatback is too low to protect the child from neck injuries in a rear collision.

The North Dakota Department of Health offers the following guidelines to help parents comply with the law and select the right child restraint for their child's age and weight:

- Babies should ride in rear-facing seats until they are at least 1 year old and weigh at least 20 pounds.
- Children who weigh more than 20 pounds and are at least 1 year of age should ride in a forward-facing car seat with harness until they weigh 40 pounds.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

- Children who weigh between 40 and 80 pounds and are less than 4'9" tall should use a booster seat.
- Kids who weigh more than 80 pounds and are more than 4'9" usually can fit into a lap and shoulder belt.

A fact sheet for parents and caregivers explaining the law and providing information about the safest way for children to ride in cars is available on the Department of Health's website at www.ndhealth.gov. Click on "Child Passenger Safety Law Fact Sheet" in the What's New section of the website. For more information, contact the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2286.

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